

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166478

EXDIS

FOLLOWING GRENADA 0034 SENT ACIONJUNE 17, 1977 REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GRENADA 0034

EXDIS

FOR S/S RUST DEMING FROM MARK DION

USOAS DEL 13

FROM USDEL OASGA

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG OAS OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)

SUBJ: SECRETARY'S BILATERAL WITH FONMIN MONTIEL - JUNE 16

1. PARTICIPANTS: US: THE SECRETARY, AMB TODMAN, JANET
RUEBN, USOAS (NOTETAKER). NICARAGUA FONMIN ALEJANDRO
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MONTIEL.

2. SUBJECT: BELIZE, CENTRAL AMERICA, HUMAN RIGHTS, CUBA.

3. THE CONVERSATION OPENED WITH AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
SECRETARY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THE STRUCTURE OF
THE INFORMAL DIALOGUE WAS TOO FORMAL. NEXT YEAR, THEY

SAID, THERE SHOULD BE SHORTER INTERVENTIONS WITH MORE GIVE AND TAKE.

4. MONTIEL WENT ON TO A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. THE MOST OUTSTANDING FOR HIM IS THE GUATEMALA-BELIZE DISPUTE. HE THINKS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA IS DELAYING A SOLUTION AND, NOT WANTING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR AN UNPOPULAR ACCORD, MIGHT WELL LEAVE THE PROBLEM TO THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. BUT IN HIS OPINION THE SITUATION CANNOT GO ON.

5. SECRETARY VANCE AGREED, NOTING THAT THE LONGER THE DISPUTE DRAGS ON, THE GREATER THE CHANCE OF CONFLAGRATION. HE SAID THAT HE SEES THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO PARTIES HARDENING; HE ASKED MONTIEL'S THOUGHTS ON MEDIATION.

6. MONTIEL RESPONDED THAT MEDIATION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION BECAUSE GUATEMALA AND GREAT BRITAIN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WORK OUT A COMPROMISE BY THEMSELVES. MONTIEL ADDED THAT HAD THE PROPOSALS WHICH GUATEMALA IS NOW MAKING BEEN PRESENTED 15 YEARS AGO, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED. NOW, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO WAY.

7. WITH REFERENCE TO THE EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS DISPUTE, MONTIEL THINKS THAT THE SITUATION WILL BE COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL WHEN THE NEXT GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR TAKES POWER. HE CLAIMED THAT NICARAGUA HAS BEEN TRYING TO ACT AS A CONFIDENTIAL

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MEDIATOR THROUGHOUT THE DISPUTE. ONE REASON HE THINKS THAT PEACE WILL PREVAIL IS THE DESIRE TO END THE EXPENSE OF OAS PEACEKEEPING FORCES.

8. MONTIEL ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE US-COLOMBIAN TREATY ON THE QUITA SUENO ISLANDS WHICH WAS SIGNED 5 YEARS AGO BUT HAS NOT BEEN RATIFIED. THE SECRETARY INDICATED THAT THE TREATY WOULD PROBABLY GET NOWHERE IN CONGRESS, ADDING THAT IT IS NOT A LIVE ISSUE NOW.

9. AMB TODMAN ASKED WHETHER NICARAGUA HAD DISCUSSED THE ISSUE WITH COLOMBIA. MONTIEL REPLIED THAT THEY HAD NOT; THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT IT WITH COLOMBIA. AMBASSADOR TODMAN SAID THE US WOULD HAPPILY ACCEPT ANY AGREEMENT WHICH NICARAGUA AND COLOMBIA MIGHT REACH.

10. THE SECRETARY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER THEN TOOK UP THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. MONTIEL TOOK A DEFENSIVE POSTURE FROM THE OUTSET, NOTING THAT THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ELECTED BY A CLEAR MAJORITY AND THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD BEEN BITTERLY DIVIDED. NICARAGUA, HE SAID, IS NOT A DICTATORSHIP. FURTHERMORE, MONTIEL CLAIMED

THAT DESPITE OCCASIONAL ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH MIGHT OCCUR, THERE IS NO SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION. HE CALLED ALLEGATIONS OF THESE VIOLATIONS IN NICARAGUA LIES, PERPETRATED BY PEOPLE WHO DO NOT LIKE NICARAGUA. FINALLY, HE LINKED THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITH THE THREAT OF TERRORISM, RECALLING HIS OWN KIDNAPPING TWO YEARS AGO BY "GUERRILLAS" WHO THEN ESCAPED TO CUBA. HE SAYS THEY ARE NOW BACK IN NICARAGUA.

11. SECRETARY VANCE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THIS IMPEDIMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED SO AS NOT TO SOUR US-NICARAGUAN RELATIONS.

12. AMBASSADOR TODMAN SUGGESTED THAT NICARAGUA COULD
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TAKE SOME CONCRETE ACTIONS TO CONVINCE THE US THAT ITS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IS IMPROVING. FOR EXAMPLE, HE RECALLED THAT NICARAGUA HAD PROMISED TO LIFT THE STATE OF SIEGE AFTER THE TRIALS HAD TAKEN PLACE. HOWEVER, THE STATE OF SIEGE STILL EXISTS. MONTIEL REPLIED THAT NICARAGUA WOULD NOT RESPOND TO PRESSURE AND THAT TIMING IS VERY IMPORTANT IN ANY POLITICAL MOVE. HE ADDED THAT THE STATE OF SIEGE IS ONLY NOMINAL, ANYWAY. AMBASSADOR TODMAN ENDED THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION BY ASKING MONTIEL TO THINK OF WAYS IN WHICH THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT COULD PRESENT A BETTER INTERNATIONAL IMAGE, AND IN THAT WAY, HELP THE UNITED STATES HELP NICARAGUA.

13. THERE FOLLOWED A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF NICARAGUA'S ECONOMIC SITUATION. MONTIEL SAID THAT HE WISHED THERE WERE A MORE FAVORABLE BALANCE OF TRADE WITH THE US, BUT THAT OVERALL, NICARAGUA'S BALANCE OF TRADE IS FAVORABLE.

14. SECRETARY VANCE THEN OUTLINED THE CURRENT US POLICY TOWARD CUBA. HE SAID THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE, A FISHING TREATY HAD TO BE NEGOTIATED. IN THE SECOND PLACE, THE US CAN HAVE MORE INFLUENCE ON AND INFORMATION ABOUT CUBA BY OPENING A US INTERESTS SECTION IN HAVANA THAN IT HAS NOW WITH NO PRESENCE THERE. HE SAID THAT EVENTUALLY THE US MAY BE ABLE TO HELP THE AMERICANS NOW JAILED IN CUBA AND PERHAPS EVEN IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF THE CUBANS.

15. SECRETARY THEN LISTED A NUMBER OF OTHER ISSUES WHICH EVENTUALLY NEED TO BE DISCUSSED WITH CUBA: ITS PARTICIPATION IN AFRICAN POLITICS, ITS MEDDLING IN PUERTO RICO, INTERNATIONALIZATION OF PROPERTIES AND OUTSTANDING CLAIMS. HE PROMISED THAT THE US WOULD DISCUSS
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THESE WITH CARE AND CAUTION.

16. THE SECRETARY ASSERTED THAT IT IS BETTER TO HAVE A
DIALOGUE WITH CUBA AND EXERT A MODERATING INFLUENCE THERE
THAN TO LEAVE CUBA TO THE SOVIETS. HE PROMISED THAT THE
US WOULD NOT RUSH TO ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
WITH CUBA. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT IN THE LONG RUN, THE
US MIGHT BE ABLE TO PERSUADE CUBA TO STOP MEDDLING IN PUERTO
RICO AND TO WITHDRAW FROM AFRICA. MONTIEL ASKED IF THE
US COULD ALSO TELL CUBA TO STOP MEDDLING IN NICARAGUA.
MCGEE UNQUOTE VANCE

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